

SOCIAL HYGIENE—1937 MODEL

Some Last Year's Events Which Have Helped to Build the Framework for the Coming Year

The whole history of social hygiene is living drama, from the days of Moses' law-giving down to the present sweeping drive for syphilis control, but surely no period has seen more dramatic events and rapid developments than the past twelve months. This has been particularly true as regards public knowledge and cooperation in the campaign against the venereal diseases. At the beginning of 1936 the situation in this respect was much the same as at any time since the World War impetus slackened its force. Comparatively few people recognized syphilis and gonorrhea as widespread infectious diseases. The social hygiene societies and other health agencies battered against a wall of secrecy and indifference which successfully hid the real facts. The great multitude remained unaware of this threat to family and community health, nor knew what to do if the threat became a reality. Many, as always, were suffering the results of their lack of knowledge, without hope for future recovery.

Contrast with that shadowed picture the brilliant scene as the year closed, with health officials and social hygiene executives meeting in Washington at the invitation of Surgeon-General Parran and with the benediction of President Roosevelt, to map a nation-wide fight against syphilis, and asking for \$25,000,000 to provide the sinews of war. Newspapers and news magazines hailed this conference as one of the most important ever held in the United States—gave it front-page space—wrote leading editorials of approving comment. Many of them had been crusading all through the year for such objectives. The thousand conferees, returning to the country's four corners, found that the home folks had kept pace with Washington happenings, knew what was going on. People were reading and talking about syphilis and how to avoid it. More sick people were seeking treatment. Town authorities were appropriating funds for clinics for those who could not afford to pay doctors. All were ready to help conquer this ancient enemy, now smoked out of ambush. Truly, a marvelous change in public attitude to come about in one short year.

What brought about this change? What happened in 1936 to lift the fog of public apathy and indifference, and promise continuing recognition to social hygiene as a vital issue in present-day life? Passing the year's events in review, we note a few "peaks of progress":

Surgeon-General Parran's announced determination to make the prevention and control of syphilis a major objective of the United States Public Health survey program, and the practical efforts of himself and his staff to find ways and means to this end, as witness the "Christmas Conference" mentioned above.

The passage of the Social Security Act, with the provision of funds applicable to venereal disease control through the state and city departments of health, and the resultant developing of new and effective programs in important localities.

The great increase in newspaper cooperation in social hygiene education of the public, led off by special series of articles published by the Chicago Sunday Tribune and the New York Daily News, and the Washington Herald, and followed in the course of the year by similar feature articles in other important newspapers across the country. A few are: the Portland Oregonian, San Francisco News, Los Angeles Evening News, Philadelphia News, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Dallas News, Buffalo Times, and Syracuse Post-Standard. Aside from these special features, news items and editorials are frequent and informative. Metropolitan dailies, including the New York Times, New York Herald-Tribune, World-Telegram, Evening Post, Sun, the Brooklyn Eagle, and others, which have been accustomed to speak more or less frankly for some time, have increased their cooperation and are definitely influencing public opinion by thoughtful editorials. Many newspapers in smaller communities, such as the Winston-Salem (N. C.) Observer and Evanston (Ill.) News-Index, are actively crusading for the establishment or improvement of local treatment facilities.

The similar increase in interest and practical educational help shown by the weekly and monthly standard maga-

zines. Doctor Parran's fine article, "Why Don't We Stamp Out Syphilis," appearing in the July Survey Graphic, and condensed in the July Reader's Digest, set a new high for reader interest and continued distribution. Seven months after these articles appeared, the publishers and the Association have constant call for reprints, the Digest reporting to date a total distribution of nearly 400,000 to all parts of the world. Recent articles in the Literary Digest, Time, News-Week, and other weeklies, are familiar to all, as are the frequent mentions in home magazines like Ladies' Home Journal, Woman's Home Companion, Farmer's Wife, and Pictorial Review. Liberty has published a number of editorials. Physical Culture ran a series of four special articles during the year. Magazines with special articles in preparation for early 1937 publication include The New York Woman, The Forum, Parents' Magazine, and others. Semi-professional publications such as the National Parent-Teacher, the Junior League Magazine, and Hygeia, have published several articles. The many articles in medical journals, publications for nurses and for other professional and technical groups, have indirectly been of great value in promoting public knowledge and interest during the year.

The increased cooperation of large membership groups such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Council of Women, whose public health committees during 1936 developed definite programs for club cooperation in syphilis control will enlist the interest and effort of millions of women.

The renewed educational efforts of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, which during 1936 prepared for publication (in February, 1937) for the third time a statement concerning syphilis, as one of its regular monthly series of full-page magazine advertisements and distributed thousands of reprints of this advertisement and of a new edition of the pamphlet "The Great Imitator," already widely circulated.

The production of the new "talking slide film" "For All Our Sakes," dealing with syphilis, under the sponsorship of the United States Public Health Service and the Association, and the purchase and showing of this production by a large number of health officers and agencies, mercantile, industrial and other concerns among employees and the lay public.

Publication of the report of the Committee on Survey of Research on the Gonococcus and Gonococcal Infections by the National Research Council and the Association, and a resultant quickening of interest in the possibilities of doing for this prevalent and serious disease as much as has been done for syphilis.

The holding of the fourth annual New York Regional Conference in January, with 2,500 people attending; similar meetings in Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, held by local social hygiene committees last fall; Social Hygiene Week, November 1 to 7, sponsored by the Missouri Social Hygiene Association; the month-long educational campaign conducted by the Erie Social Hygiene Association in November and December. Dozens of other conferences, meetings, and sessions held all over the country, by state and local groups and national agencies such as the American Medical Association, the National Conference of Social Work, the American Public Health Association, and the American Hospital Association.

The establishment of numerous new social hygiene committees or societies during 1936, among them:

California—Southern California Association for the Study and Prevention of Syphilis and Gonorrhea, Los Angeles.

Illinois—Social Hygiene Committee, Robinson; Social Hygiene Committee, Council of Social Agencies, Rock Island.

New Jersey—Institute on Marriage and the Home, East Orange.

New York—Social Hygiene Committee, Chautauqua County Tuberculosis and Health Association, Dunkirk; Club for Prevention of Venereal Disease, Middletown.

Ohio—Social Hygiene Committee, Cleveland Health Council, Cleveland.

Washington—Social Hygiene Committee, Tacoma Public Health Council, Tacoma.

These are but a few glimpses of a swiftly moving procession of events, each of which we believe has had its effect in bringing about the great increase noted in public interest and information, and in creating the present favorable outlook for further progress during 1937. Many other factors were involved. A particularly fortunate set of circumstances combined to open the way for these activities, and behind these were years of hard work by all concerned with family health and welfare to bring about just such circumstances, and direction and purpose and planning which enable the wise use of the fortunate situation when it finally occurred. To the leaders and workers who have for long devoted their thought and labor to attack on the barriers of silence and ignorance which, we may hope, are now definitely beginning to break down, belong the praise and the credit and the gratitude of posterity. And in the exultation of the moment over the possibility of actually conquering syphilis at last, it is not forgotten that other phases of the social hygiene program—among them education for marriage and parenthood, the repression of prostitution, and the prevention of sex delinquency—have played and must continue to play, an important part in the programs and benefits of the future.

As the agency serving as a national clearing house, the Association and its staff as workers in the ranks, take pleasure in presenting this brief review, and in behalf of the social hygiene societies and the communities for which they labor, we thank all who have helped in any way in the year's progress, and bespeak their coöperation in the days to come.*

"AMATEUR" AND BRANCH NIGHT

Los Angeles County Medical Association Institutes Unique Entertainment Feature

Standing room only! Everybody was out to see colleagues "do their stuff."

Amateur and Branch Night at the Los Angeles County Medical Association on Thursday evening, March 4, packed the Lounge.

This unique evening of entertainment, which brought many members of the branches and their families to the Association, began with a dinner in the Association headquarters, at which there were 160 guests.

Following the dinner the president, Dr. John P. Nuttall, introduced the master of ceremonies for the evening, Dr. D. G. Tollefson. Much credit goes to Doctor Tollefson and his physician associates who took part in the program, and who were responsible for making the evening a great success.

Doctor Tollefson, as a preliminary and unannounced skit, called upon the secretaries of the branches to answer certain questions relative to those parts of Los Angeles County in which their respective branches functioned. Some of these were pertinent and humorous questions. The secretaries, however, faced the ordeal without flinching, and some came through victorious. The "talent display" from the various geographical branches was then brought forward.

First was the presentation of the Alhambra branch: Doctor Eugene S. Maxson's rendition of two poems by Kipling—"Gunga Din" and "Boots"—winning much applause.

Dr. Marvel Beem of Santa Monica—Doctor Beem, by the way, has a splendid voice—opened the program for the Santa Monica branch with songs of the type that Lawrence Tibbett likes to sing. Dr. R. J. Morrison's impersonation of Harry Lauder—costume, coughs, cane and all—was fine entertainment. Dr. John Bergmann, the accompanist, completed the Santa Monica act.

The Pasadena branch for years has been hiding the ability of its professional men in ballet technique. Ballet costumes are intriguing on the male form. They created a picture filled with movement and of beauty that certainly never could have been imagined by anyone who was not fortunate enough to see it. So graceful was their interpretation of a difficult Russian dance that they were

presented with a gorgeous vegetable bouquet, which expressed the appreciation of some of their admirers. Doctors Robert K. Gustafson, Lyle G. Craig, Ralph E. Netzel, and Russell M. Decker made up the ballet, the accompanist being Doctor Decker.

Because Amateur Night happened to fall upon the same night as the Speakers' Bureau, the Master of Ceremonies called for remarks from the Speakers' Bureau, pertinent to the work of that Bureau.

Dr. H. O. Bames, scheduled for a talk at the Speakers' Bureau meeting, must be given credit for arising to a very difficult situation when he was called upon by the Master of Ceremonies to give his talk. Doctor Bames in doing this set an example for all who aspire to address public gatherings. To be a good speaker, one must be prepared, of course, at all times, to get on one's feet, and even when the spirit that surrounds one is of levity, to be able to command attention—this Doctor Bames did.

Doctors George B. Kryder, S. H. Welch, F. E. Poole, Fred W. Loring, Orrie Ghrist, and William M. Gibbs made up the Glendale troupe, announced as the "Choral Society of Glendale," otherwise known as the "Disturb-ers." To describe this act one has to use the term "burlesque." The theme of the show was a sponsored radio broadcast.

Dr. Clinton D. Hubbard of Huntington Park mystified the audience by pulling white rabbits out of hats, and other feats of magic. Much applause greeted this presentation of the southeast branch.

From Pomona came a male quartet: Doctors H. C. Anderson, C. A. Arneson, C. W. White, M. R. Jones, and Elwin Welch, in blackface. Good voices all and fine entertainment.

Long Beach, one of the largest branches, depended upon only two of its members to uphold the honors of that branch. But the Branch had reason for its confidence in these two doctors—Raymond Swinney and R. T. Uhls. The act opened with the singing of "Frankie and Johnny," with guitar accompaniment by Doctor Uhls. The setting was of an older time in a small town in Iowa and a medicine show. Doctor Swinney, as Dr. I. Curem, gave a most realistic portrayal of the old-time Medicine Man exhorting "Bray-zilian Oil" and cure-alls of various types for the cure of man and beasts. Yes, this was an act.

Nearly four hundred members attended the show. It was one of the biggest gatherings at the Association since the opening of the headquarters building several years ago.

EXPERT WITNESSES*

By EDWARD C. KRAUSS

The old controversy about expert witnesses has been revived by the publication, CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, with a brand-new suggestion—that members of the medical profession refuse to testify as experts unless appointed by the Court.

California law provides for the appointment of experts by the Court for both civil and criminal cases, but also permits the testimony of experts hired by either or both sides. The courts have frequently used the power to appoint experts in criminal cases, but they rarely appear in civil cases; with the result that personal injury suits, in particular, seem to be battles between groups of experts open to the suspicion of being partisans of either plaintiff or defendant.

No self-respecting medical man wants to be put in this position, say Doctors H. D. Barnard and George E. Tucker in the publication referred to, but there is no agreement as to how the situation can be avoided. The suggestion that they decline to appear except when appointed by the Court is made by Dr. Andrew S. Lobingier, who originally suggested the present California statute permitting court appointment.

The law provides all that is needed, in the opinion of Doctor Lobingier; what is at fault is the apathy of judges in exercising their privilege. But if the judges will not act, the medical men can, since there is no compulsion upon experts to give testimony. A witness may be re-

* From the American Social Hygiene Association.

* Editorial, Los Angeles Times, March 3, 1937.